

USDOL Responses to Technical Questions
Project to Combat Child Labor in Areas of Liberian Rubber Production (SGA 12-05)

August 14, 2012

Question 1: On page 14, section IV.B.3 Needs Assessment, states that “The pre-award needs assessment will serve as a basis for a more detailed baseline assessment to be conducted post-award. Other factors included in the assessment are: hours and conditions of work; age and sex distribution...” Do the “Other factors” listed in the solicitation relate to the pre-award needs assessment or the post-award baseline assessment?

USDOL Response 1: The “other factors” listed in this section of the SGA are requirements of the pre-award (pre-application) needs assessment.

Question 2: On page 17, section IV.C.3.e Other Professional Personnel, states that “Applicants must hire Local Coordinators who will live in areas of intervention and be responsible for implementing project activities at the regional and local levels.” Do Applicants have to name Local Coordinators in their proposals?

USDOL Response 2: Applicants are not required to name Local Coordinators in their proposals.

Question 3: On page 17, section IV.D.2 Annex B: Work Plan. Should the Applicant provide a first year work plan or a full Life of Program work plan?

USDOL Response 3: Applicants are required to submit a Life of Project work plan as part of their application.

Question 4: On page 17, section IV.D.3 Annex C: Past Performance Table(s) states that “Applicants must list no more than six references/projects.” However, it also states that “Past performance of subgrantee/subcontractor providing direct services over the past five years must also be included in the table.” Should the applicant provide six references/projects for itself PLUS references/projects of subgrantees/subcontractors or must the Applicant only provide six references/projects total between itself and all its subgrantees/subcontractors?

USDOL Response 4: Applicants must submit a combined total of six references. These six references can include references for both the lead organization and any subgrantees/subcontractors).

Question 5: On page 19, section C Output–Based Budget, states “Applicant’s cost proposals must not depend on other contracts, grants, or awards to implement the Applicant’s proposed strategy”. Does this prohibit applicants from sharing office rent and other operational costs with existing in-country programs?

USDOL Response 5: Applicants may propose cost saving strategies, including sharing office space and operational costs. However, if awarded the grant, the Grantee will be responsible for covering the various costs outlined in their budget with the level of resources approved by USDOL. Grantees should not expect that USDOL will approve additional costs for an item in their budget should the project with which costs are being shared end before the completion of this USDOL-funded project.

Question 6: On Page 20, the third bullet point states “Allocate at least \$70,000 for support to the external interim and final implementation evaluation” Should we consider at least \$70,000 for each evaluation or at least \$70,000 for the two evaluations?

USDOL Response 6: Applicants must allocate a total of at least \$70,000, which will cover both the interim and final evaluations.

Question 7: Under the Education Component listed on Page 8, the solicitation notes that applicants must “propose direct delivery of education and training services to target children in areas of smallholder rubber production (areas outside of company owned/company-run rubber plantations).” Is it also possible to propose strategies for supporting direct delivery of education and training services for children residing in company owned/company-run rubber plantations should the need be discovered through assessment?

USDOL Response 7: As indicated in Section I on page 3 of the SGA:

Applicants must propose strategies for working with key stakeholders, such as government, rubber companies, labor unions and other civil society actors, to improve policies for addressing and reducing child labor and for implementing, monitoring and enforcing such policies on company-owned or operated rubber plantations. The project must also support the direct delivery of services to children engaged in or at-risk of various forms of child labor and their households in communities where livelihoods are largely dependent on smallholder rubber production.

Bullet 5 of Section I.E.1 on page 8 further states that Applicants must “[p]ropose direct delivery of education and training services to target children in areas of smallholder rubber production (areas outside of company owned/company-run rubber plantations.”

Question 8: On page 5, footnote 19, the SGA mentions two CYCLE project documents: a) CYCLE project document, August 2007 and b) IRC, Child Labor and Education in Liberia. Needs Assessment in Targeted Communities, New York, June 2006. We respectfully request that USDOL shares these documents.

USDOL Response 8: These documents have been included with the SGA 12-05 background materials: <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/grants/SGA12-05.htm>. Applicants may also refer to the project summary and evaluations of USDOL-funded CYCLE project, found at: <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/map/countries/liberia.htm>.

Question 9: Does the funding for construction threshold noted on Page 8, apply to funds proposed by the applicant through cost-share?

USDOL Response 9: As stated in section I.E. “Funding for construction must not exceed 10 percent of the project budget without prior USDOL approval.” In their proposals, Applicants may include additional funds for construction as cost share. These funds should be included in column (d) of the budget line 6.g. of the 424.a. Should USDOL elect to fund the proposal, this would constitute USDOL’s prior approval of the level of funding the Grantee is proposing for construction costs.

Question 10: What are the respective counties included under the Northern, Central and Southeast Regions described on Page 6?

USDOL Response 10: According to the 2008 National Population and Housing Census, the following counties constitute the Northern region—Bomi, Gbarpolu, Grand Cape Mount and Lofa counties; Central region—Bong, Grand Bassa, Margibi, Monteserrado, Nimba and River Cess; and Southeast region—Grand Geden, Maryland, River Gee, Grand Kru and Sinoe.

Question 11: On page 7, the SGA states “3) An overall assessment of each child and their household will determine the most appropriate type of educational and/or livelihood service to be provided and may include services for at-risk children between the ages of 5-18 years, including children of child laborers.” Please confirm that the applicant can propose to provide services to children under 5 if they are assessed to be at-risk of Child Labor?

USDOL Response 11: Section I.D on page 7 of the SGA states: “An overall assessment of each child and their households will determine the most appropriate type of educational and/or livelihood service to be provided and may include services for at-risk children between the ages of 5 and 18 years, including siblings of child laborers.”

Question 12: Are the two learning documents described on Page 11 expected to be produced immediately following award or after the completion of implementation of project activities?

USDOL Response 12: Section I.E.7 on page 11 of the SGA states:
In their applications, Applicants must commit to developing a best practices document about collaboration and/or partnership models for engagement of country governments, local unions and industry and civil society regarding child labor and worker safety practices. Applicants must also commit to producing a document on general occupational and safety standards in the agriculture sector, with specific guidelines for the rubber sector, based on research and in-country experiences and expertise (see Section VI.C). After award, Grantees must produce these two documents.

While the SGA does not prescribe a deadline for production of the best practices document, its drafting should be informed by project implementation experience and learning, which would require sufficient time to implement the project's strategy and assess good practices. Applicants are encouraged to produce the occupational and safety standards in agriculture sector document at an early enough stage in project implementation in order for the document to inform project implementation. Based on learning from project implementation, Applicants may find the need to refine/update the occupational and safety standards in agriculture sector document towards the end of the project.

Question 13: On page 18. 5. Annex E: the SGA requests that each CV includes salary information for at least the last five years of employment to the present. We respectfully request that this requirement be removed as this will create an undue burden on the applicant.

USDOL Response 13: ***Ask for clarification as to why this would create "an undue burden on the applicant."***

Question 14: On page 20, the SGA requests that applicants set aside at least 3% of the project budget to cover the costs associated with project monitoring activities. Please clarify under which category and output USDOL expects applicants to include this budget.

USDOL Response 14: The 3% set-aside for monitoring should be included as its own line item/category within the outputs-based budget. On the Standard Form 424A, this amount can be included in budget category "6h-other".

Question 15: On page 20, the SGA requests that applicants allocate at least \$70,000 to support external interim and final implementation evaluations. Please confirm that this set-aside is in addition to the 3% budget to cover project monitoring activities.

USDOL Response 15: Yes, this is in addition to and distinct from the 3% for project monitoring activities.

Question 16: According to page 20, applicants are expected to set aside \$250,000 for the baseline survey, follow-up survey, needs assessments, and research activities. Please confirm that this should be budgeted in addition to the 3% budget set aside to cover project monitoring activities and the \$70,000 to support external interim and final implementation evaluations.

USDOL Response 16: Yes, this is in addition to and distinct from the 3% for project monitoring activities.

Question 17: On page 20, please confirm that the 5% contingency provision should be included as a separate line.

USDOL Response 17: Yes, please include the 5% contingency provision as a separate line item of the Outputs-Based Budget.

Question 18: Please confirm that USDOL expects applicants to include an escalation factor in years 2 to 5, to cover inflation and salary increases. This would be included in addition to the 5% contingency provision.

USDOL Response 18: Applicants should propose a budget that provides for the resources to implement the project throughout its duration. As appropriate, this may include an escalation factor to cover inflation or salary increases if this is in keeping with the Applicant's standard practice for factoring such costs into a multi-year project budget. The 5% contingency provision is intended to cover costs that the Applicant did not anticipate at the time of award. For example, this could include inflation costs in excess of the escalation factor used by the Applicant in developing their budget.

Question 19: I see from the solicitation that Public International Organizations are eligible to apply. However, as a Public International Organization ____ is unable to meet the audit and counter-terrorism requirements as they are listed in the solicitation. Is DOL able to use different grant provisions for PIOs? In our extensive work with the Department of State, USAID, CDC, and other US Government agencies, each uses a grant template for PIOs that is different than the one used for US-based organizations. But we have not found reference to PIO provisions in the DOL grant guidelines.

USDOL Response 19: Public International Organization (PIOs) are eligible to apply for this award. In negotiating an award with a PIO, USDOL would be willing to discuss the inclusion of appropriate language acknowledging the rights and privileges as currently established and afforded to a given PIO by the US Government and in relation to US law. However, USDOL will require PIOs that elect to apply for this award to adhere to the specific requirements spelled out in the SGA concerning audits and counter-terrorism, for the purposes of implementation and management of this award.

Question 20: Can USDOL provide the names of Government of Liberia (GOL) institutions that it has consulted with in regard to this project? For example, the Rubber Master Plan suggests that any project working in the rubber sector will need to get prior approval from the Rubber Development Fund Inc. Has USDOL consulted with this body, or the Ministry of Agriculture about this type of approval?

USDOL Response 20: The USDOL consulted various Ministries within the Government of Liberia. Please see Section IV.B.1 on pages 13-14 of the SGA for a list of suggested Ministries within the Government of Liberia with which Applicants may consult. While USDOL did not consult with the Rubber Development Fund, Inc., USDOL consulted with a number of Ministries that contribute to the Rubber Development Fund, Inc., including the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Labor.